

PLUS:

St. Louis Blues Society Finds a Home at Nebula

New Traveling Exhibition Opens at the National Blues Museum: Women Of The Blues

Johnnie Johnson Awarded the Congressional Gold Medal



PRESERVING AND PERPETUATING BLUES MUSIC IN AND FROM ST. LOUIS SINCE 1984

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Happy New Year! There is no better way to start the new year than with new music! The 3rd Annual STLBS Compilation CD is being released in January and features 16 St. Louis acts performing original material created specifically for this project. Over the last 3 years we have featured 45 different local acts, which really goes to show the depth of the St. Louis Blues Music Scene. Also notable, the 15 IN 15 compilation was the most played record on KDHX FM in 2016! Special thanks this year to Paul Niehaus IV at Blue Lotus Studios, Tony Esterly, Mike Zitt and all of the musicians who put their time in to create such an amazing group of tracks. Members are receiving their CD in the mail with this BluesLetter. However, if you become a member or renew your membership in January 2017, we'll send you one too.

The St. Louis Blues Society has lots in store for 2017! Last year we were involved in over 40 events, produced a compilation CD, opened our new offices at Nebula, helped support the opening of the National Blues Museum, developed education programming and continued to create and distribute the Bluesletter. We are hoping to get more people involved this year. So if you're someone that wants to spend some time working for a better St. Louis through Blues Music or have ideas on new projects, please reach out to us! The STLBS is only as successful as the people who put in the time and energy to make it better!

It is also important to note that In the last few months there have been several terrible situations that point out some of the problems in St. Louis. Whether it was the brutal beating of local musician Tom Hall or the more recent ignorant breaking of the front windows at Beale on Broadway...it is very apparent that St. Louis has problems that need to be overcome to make St. Louis the city we all know it can be. What is also apparent is how special St. Louis' music community is! So often we hear about how St. Louis is the greatest sports city in the country, but the way that the music community comes around to help folks in need makes the argument that St. Louis is also one of the greatest MUSIC cities in the country. And I for one am proud to call it home!

Here's to a happy and healthy new year for everyone. Thank you all so much for supporting the St. Louis Blues Society and all of the music that spills into our streets every single day!

Jeremy Segel-Moss, Chairperson

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I'd love to hear from you! Please write me at jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org and tell me what you think of our organization's growth.

The St. Louis Blues Society is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating blues music in and from St. Louis, while fostering its growth and appreciation. The St. Louis Blues Society provides blues artists the opportunity for public performance and individual improvement in their field, all for the educational and artistic benefit of the general public.

E-mailJeremy

The St. Louis Blues Society is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Missouri corporation. Memberships to the Blue's Society are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

BluesLetter Sundraising EVINTS membership 2017 GET INVOLVED

2017 IS THE YEAR OF GROWTH AND STLBS NEEDS YOUR HELP

BLUESLETTER - The STLBS Bi-monthly newsletter is always in need of help. We are looking for writers, photographers, advertising and distribution. contact: Jeremy Segel-Moss at jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org

EDUCATION - Education programming in 2017 is one of our biggest goals. The STLBS is planning education programs in schools, seminars for local musicians on industry standards and general content creation about the very important part St. Louis played in the development of American Music. contact: Michael Battle at michael-battle@sbcglobal.net

COMPILATION CDS - 2017 marks the 3rd Annual compilation CD produced by the St. Louis Blues Society. Each year features roughly 15 artists and that takes a lot of organizing. Looking for help with distribution, communication with the acts, information collection and promotion. contact: Paul Niehaus at paulniehausiv@gmail.com

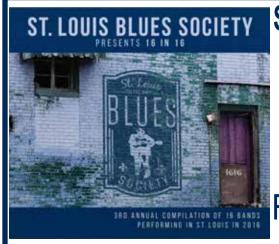
EVENTS - In 2016 the STLBS was involved with over 40 events and there are many levels to get involved with when it comes to event support. Maybe you would like to volunteer time at one of our booths or want to get involved with planning events such as the International Blues Challenge or Atomic Blues Festival, or maybe there is an event you'd like to help create.

contact: Mary Kaye Tönnies at volunteer4@stlouisbluessociety.org

FUNDRAISING - With so many projects in the works, the STLBS is always in need of fundraising opportunities. Jobs include helping with raffles and silent auctions, grants and sponsorship. Funding is crucial to the future of the STLBS and we need your help! contact: Jeremy Segel-Moss at jesel-moss@stlouisbluessociety.org

MEMBERSHIP - STLBS Members are the cornerstone of our organization. Looking for help with creating member perks, membership drives and creating new membership events.

contact: Jeremy Segel-Moss at isegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org







BISTRO & MUSIC HOUSE

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JANUARY EVENTS 7:00pm Honeywise Cedar Falls, IA THES 3 7:00_{PM} **Box of Nerves** WED 4 Jeremy Joyce THUR 5 7:00_{PM} Nicole Nelson Nashville, TN FRI 6 7:00pm Jim Manley Jazz Trio LIVE BRUNCH with The Breakfast Boys! SAT 7 11:00_{AM} 7:00_{PM} Joe Bozzi Band 10.30pm Moonshine Rhythm Club Nashville, TN SUN 8 1:00_{AM} Moonshine Rhythm Club Nashville, TN 11:00_{AM} Hot Jazz Brunch with Miss Jubilee MON 9 Singer/Songwriter Night with Ed Belling 7:00_{PM} TUES 10 7:00рм The Green McDonough Band Glenn Smith and Eric Slauahter The Perrilles Project Peoria, IL THUR 12 7:00рм **Bottoms Up Blues Gang** SAT 14 11:00_{AM} Hot Live Brunch with Ryan Benthall on Piano 7:00_{PM} Fresh Burn Columbia, IL HOT JAZZ "live" BRUNCH Featuring **Dr. Dan the Pancake Man MON 16 7:00**рм Singer / Songwriter Night hosted by Ed Belling FRI 20 6:30рм Mandy Rowden Nashville, TN 8:00рм Spaceship SAT 21 12:00AM **Spaceship** 11:00_{AM} Saturday Hot Live Brunch featuring Jim Manley! 7:00_{PM} Analog Thief 11:00_{AM} Hot Live Sunday Brunch with "GOOD MEDICINE REVIVAL SHOW" **MON 23** TUES 24 7:00рм The Jazz Troubadours The Wrong Omar Mini THUR 26 7:00рм Johnny O'Brien Minneapolis, MN Brendan & The Strangest Ways Buffalo, NY Fleur De Lou Allstars FRI 27 7:00рм Boogiefoot Miss Jubilee & The Humdingers Hot Swina Jazz Brunch Singer Songwriter Night **MON 30** 7:00рм Sissy Brown Byers, TX with Duane Mark Austi

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Women Of The Blues:

A Coast-to-Coast Collection Traveling Exhibition Opens January 7, 2017 at the National Blues Museum

Women Of The Blues: A Coast-To-Coast Collection is a photographic celebration of the women who sing the blues and the photographers who photograph them from across the nation who enrich the musical spirit of America. The show features over sixty photographs of these divine divas, representing diverse age groups and ethnic backgrounds. This traveling exhibit has been mounted in honor of the late great "Queen of the Blues" Koko Taylor. Koko passed away in June of 2009 at the age of 80, after an illustrious decades-long career of entertaining listeners with Chicago blues, electric blues, rhythm and blues, and more.

The exhibit is curated by photojournalist Lynn Orman Weiss, president of Orman Music & Media and founder of the Women of the Blues Foundation. Photographs in the exhibit represent singers of a wide variety of blues styles, ranging from Southern soul blues to Chicago blues to rock/blues. The exhibit was created to honor these soulful singers of truth who embody the essence of the blues. The exhibit seeks to perpetuate blues culture for future generations of artists, fans and historians.

"I love photographing and collecting pictures of blues women, recording their emotions, their beauty, and their visceral expressions exuding from their souls," says Orman Weiss. "When we got together at an awards show or a festival, it was a great sisterhood. It is my vision that this exhibit capture the hearts of observers and give them reason to find out more about these extraordinary performers."

Inspired by the women's suffrage, social justice and civil rights movements, Orman Weiss invited both national and international photographers to share their poignant and powerful images of these extraordinary women. The voices of these blues women are part of the social fabric of America and the world. Each singer is

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Lynn Orman Weiss, Exhibition Curator photo courtesy of Orman Music and Media

a unique artist reflecting her culture, community and hometown. The women transcend the sadness and challenges of life in a world of harsh realities through the healing power of music.

The photographs feature women blues artists at festivals and venues across the nation, including the Chicago Blues Festival, the Maui Sugar Mill Club in Los Angeles, the Blues Cruise on the Caribbean Sea, and the Briggs Farm Festival in Pennsylvania. The exhibit includes images of famous blues stars like Mavis Staples, Irma Thomas and Shirley King, whose father was the one and only B. B King. Viewers of the traveling show will see photographs of beloved West Coast artists Candye Kane and Sherry Jackson Pruitt, renowned violinist Anne Harris, and Koko Taylor Award recipient Ruthie Foster. In addition, photos of Chicago's southern soul blues diva Nellie "Tiger" Travis, the legendary Holle Thee Maxwell, international touring blues singer Deitra Farr, and rising star Shemekia Copeland, daughter of the late great blues guitarist, Johnny Copeland are also on display.

The Women of the Blues Foundation supports the Koko Taylor Celebrity Aid Foundation and the Sisters of Royalty, among other benefactors. For more information about the exhibit and the photographers, visit www.womenoftheblues.com



St. Louis Blues Society Finds A New Home at Nebula

By Thomas Crone

This article originally appeared December 06, 2016 in Nebula News and reprinted here with permission

Recently, with the release of the latest edition of the St. Louis Blues Society's BluesLetter, Mary Kaye Tönnies and Jeremy Segel-Moss sat in their new basement office at Nebula. Together, they folded hundreds of the issue's copies for mailing. About 300 members get the informative newsletter sent to them, and many more are distributed throughout the city's blues-friendly clubs and taverns, along with coffeehouses and record stores.

Tönnies, the communications director of the Society's board of directors, remembers that "this was a job for my kitchen table." And that table served a valuable role for years, though it's now retired from the Society's official use and is back to being a humble kitchen piece.

These days, Tönnies and Segel-Moss enjoy in a nice, large office space inside of Nebula. Segel-Moss says that the organization was ready for a move to an actual office environment; overdue, really.

"The Blues Society," Segel-Moss says, "needed a home. For all of our stuff and as a place to organize. We're in our 32nd year as an organization. With a resurgence in the last couple of years, we're now involved in over 40 events and educational programs a year. We need a home base. Nebula was very generous in offering us a home at a reasonable rate."

Over those many years, the Blues Society relied on generous backers who offered free, temporary spaces, though those rooms sometimes came at a cost not measured in dollars. For example, "we used to have board meetings in the back room of the old Riddle's. On any given day, it could be a madhouse, or was very hard to park near there. Having access to meeting rooms [at Nebula] is priceless to us.

"A grassroots organization," Segel-Moss continues, "should be run of out people's houses for a while. But after that while, it should have a space."

Having secured donor funding specifically for the move, Segel-Moss, hopes to maintain a space at Nebula for the foreseeable future, digging into all the opportunities available.

"I'm continually impressed with the people who have offices here and I enjoy being part of this community," he says. "With an organization that firmly into supporting blues music, which is based in black music, we should be in a diverse community. With some time, maybe we can bring some blues music into this neighborhood, which would be a win-win for all of us."

In addition to publishing the Blues Letter, hosting and promoting events, working with educational institutions on programming and generally promoting the music throughout the St. Louis community, the Blues Society has a mission of curating and maintaining its own three-decades-plus history. In fact, part of the next phase of work will involve a heavy dose of archiving. All

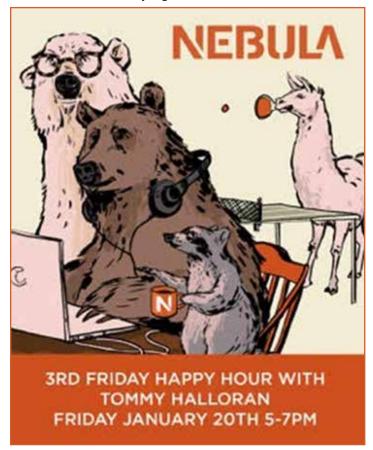
along one wall of the Society's subterranean office space, boxes and frames sit, ready for organization and, eventually, display. Here are dozens of posters from dozens of years of blues music in St. Louis, a treasure of local blues imagery.

Segel-Moss, a seasoned guitarist with his act the Bottoms Up Blues Gang, says that "ultimately, we are tasked with taking care of the history of the Blues Society. We have like 30 years of posters here; the Blues Society founded the Big Muddy festival back in 1986. So we have to organize this."

Looking at the stacks, Segel-Moss sighs, in a good way and even suggests that "there won't be enough room in here to do all of that" organizing, but at least "here, we have the beginning of it."

And, here, the Society will have a chance to attack the core of its mission statement: "The St. Louis Blues Society is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating blues music in and from St. Louis, while fostering its growth and appreciation. The St. Louis Blues Society provides blues artists the opportunity for public performance and individual improvement in their field, all for the educational and artistic benefit of the general public."

Find out more info on the Blues Society at its website: www.stlouisbluessociety.org



The 15th Annual Baby Blues Showcase was a huge success in November!

For 15 years, the Baby Blues Showcase has featured young blues artists under the age of 30. In the past, the Showcase has featured National acts like Jason Ricci and Sean Costello. In the last few years, the event has featured all St. Louis acts, which a testament to just how much talent St. Louis is filled with. Big thanks to all of the fans who came out and packed BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups, as well as all of our sponsors—especially Pabst Blue Ribbon! This year we also say goodbye to Paul Niehaus IV who has hit the Baby Blues age limit. Special thanks to Paul and all of the work he has done over the years We look forward to seeing all the new projects he has in store for us! Thanks again for a fantastic Baby Blues Showcase!



Emcee Alonzo Townsend and Play It Forward's Samatha St. Raymond congratulate raffle winners

Blues 15 Blues

photos by Reed Radcliffe



Chase Garrett



Marquise Knox



Nick Pence



Aaron Griffin



Al Holliday and the Eastside Rhythm Section



Paul Niehaus IV

ST. LOUIS BLUES SOCIETY

PRESENTS 16 IN 16

story and photo by Bob Baugh

Paul Niehaus IV hears things in his head and St. Louis is about to hear them too because this year's St. Louis Blues Society Compilation CD, 16 in 16, has just been released. It builds upon the success of last year's 15 in 15 CD that KDHX FM just named as their "Top of the Spins for 2016."

16 in 16 brings together yet another group of St. Louis musicians performing all original music. The producer and St. Louis Blues Society board member, Paul Niehaus, has been invaluable to this process volunteering his time and his Blue Lotus Studios to create the project.

Paul was a horn player in school but after hearing BB King's Live at the Regal at the age of 14 he bought a guitar and

began playing. Then he began adding instruments—bass, keyboards and percussion as he began performing with local bands. A 2009 music degree from Truman State followed and he returned home to "practice music as a professional freelancer." He has toured with several blues bands and is now considered one of the most desirable sidemen in town.

Sometimes there isn't even a block of marble. Soul singer Gene Jackson's 16 in 16 song, "Ain't No Way," was just a melody in his head. He came to the studio and hummed it for Paul. "Then Paul picked up a bass and started playing

marble that needs chipping away at steadily revealing this

awesome structure that's underneath it."

and then added a guitar and some organ. I went home with the music and wrote the lyrics. Then strings were to create this sort of Irish soul sound," Jackson explained. "It worked so well they are now making an album together for a spring release."

> Niehaus says the other side of the production business is people skills.

"Every time you get musicians together it is a combination of sum factor of all their personalities, their feeling that day, their moods...

artists are complex eccentric people, myself included. It's all about getting them comfortable and stimulated

for a good take and I'm still learning."

ST. LOUIS LUES SOCIETY

CD cover: design by Mike Zitt photo by Brock Roseberry

While Paul has a passion for playing music it's his audiophile instincts for the quality of the sound that got him into the studio. He says it was the "sounds in his head that got to him...I'd go to shows and hear how the soundboards and live mixes all too often didn't sound that good...I was obsessed and I would dissect what I would do to it." It all added up to one cognitive experience that, "the better you manage all those little parts of it the more awesome the end result."

Paul's sound obsession became a craft as he upped his knowledge, skills and recording equipment. It was formalized with the creation of Blue Lotus Studios in in 2015. He chose the name because, "in Indian spirituality the lotus represents this beautiful plant that rises from murky muddy water." He describes sound engineering much the same way: "sometimes an artist comes in with a song and within it there is the statue. But it's like a massive block of

The production of 16 in 16 began over four months ago with

conversations between Paul and Jeremy Segel-Moss, Chairperson of the STLBS, about potential bands to invite. Each band has the freedom to choose how they want to be represented on the album but it must be original music. The primary goal is to produce a stylistically diverse, wellrounded album and Paul feels they have. "If the Blues were an octopus, we got all eight arms represented," says Neihaus.

16 in 16 showcases the talent, energy and momentum in the St. Louis blues community. People like boogie piano man extraordinaire, Ethan Leinwand, moved here to be part of it. The story's the same with our highly regarded Texas transplant, John McVey. McVey describes his up-tempo swing boogie cut, "She's My Girl Now," as "sort of a garage band blues rockabilly." He moved to St. Louis because "there are more good blues in this area than the entire state of Texas...and you can reach half of the country in a day



trip. In Texas we considered a 17-hour drive a day trip. No more of that for me." Ethan and John have become part of what Paul describes as a "self-amplifying feedback loop ... they love it here, want to be a part of it and make it better."

Those tentacles keep coming with younger musicians like vocalist Emily Richard and pianist/arranger Chase Garrett of Sweetie and the Toothaches with their song, "Bigger Fool." Emily says she and Chase "are energetic, happy people, so jump blues fits our style." The song is personal. "You gotta go through the bad to write good blues," she said. Garrett, another recent transplant and friend of Ethan Leinwand's also moved to St. Louis "because this is a piano blues city." Another up-tempo contribution comes from Little Rachel with "Time Flies in The Friendly Skies." Paul says it is simply "2:42 minutes of dynamite of rockabilly energy."

Leroy Pierson and Tom Hall keep it authentic with their resonator guitars. Leroy's cut, "Easy Rider," also features Curtis Buckhannon on mandolin. They have played it together many times over the last 45 years. Leroy explains "the tune is basically traditional blues with Lightnin' Hopkins and Henry Townsend influences ... but if I listen closely I could probably find ten different influences in this song." Tom says his cut "Texas Twister Blues" draws from "a bit of North Carolina Piedmont blues and my own licks with Blind Boy Fuller and Rev. Gary Davis influencing the tune."

Traditional and urban blues, soul and R&B are also on board. Beulah Foehner, daughter of local musicians Sharon and Doug Foehner makes her vocal debut on her mother's song "Homeless Child." A straight up blues song she wrote "after seeing a photojournalist report about children living in homeless shelters." Skeet Rodgers & The Inner City Band, the urban blues specialists, weigh in with a slow tune, "I Wonder." David Dee's "Bit by The Blues," takes on a Memphis Stax-y kind of R&B blues ambiance that pairs well with Gene Jackson's soul groove.

Tyler Stokes and the Delta Soul Revival stir up the 16 in 16 musical gumbo with "I'd Rather." He says he wrote "a blues-centric song in a way that fits with their Latin/New Orleans/ Rhumba style." The Maness Brothers, a guitar and drums duo, bring a bluesy rock style with "Drive Me (And My Soul)" that is reminiscent of the Black Keys. Tommy

Halloran takes us on a jazzy/folksy Americana blues ride with "Sleepin' Dog" that features Eric McSpadden on the harmonica and some killer harmonies from Kari Liston and Leslie Sanazaro. Bob Case, who used to tour with JD Hutto and others offers up "Sometimes It Feels (Like The Whole World's Gone Crazy)" which has an early electrified Bob Dylan flavor to it.

Marty Spikener brings a couple of grooves. One is "to keep the blues scene thriving" which he does as a St. Louis Blues Society board member and by working with kids through blues education and a mentoring program. The other groove is with his On Call Band that brings a Texas shuffle/backward beat style to the CD with "Crawling Back." Paul calls it a "quintessential textbook cool blues with some funny lyrics in it." Marty laughs and says, "Paul also calls it a flat tire groove." Paul Bonn & The Bluesmen are also shuffling with "Stop the Killing" that brings an electric low down blues style featuring Jon Erblich on harmonica.

Tom "Papa" Ray brings it all home with a poignant St. Louis story, "Saint Louis Gunshot Blues." He said he wouldn't write songs for a long time but when asked this time he said, "I thought it was time for a proper weather report about our city." Tom says he "wants to do blues for the 21st century" and this styling is "somewhere between Slim Harpo and Gil Scott Heron."

What a way to start the year. The St. Louis Blues Society 16 in 16 has it all—octopus tentacles, gumbo, weather reports and some great St. Louis sounds that will get stuck in your head.



Paul Niehaus IV at Blue Lotus Studio photo by Bob Baugh

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Johnnie Johnson Awarded Congressional Gold Medal



story and photos by Bob Baugh

Johnnie Johnson's extraordinary blues and jazz keyboard talents put his name in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. But on Monday November 28, 2016 his outstanding military and civil rights service was recognized with the posthumous award of the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award.

In an award ceremony held in the Legends Room at the National Blues Museum Senator Claire McCaskill presented Johnson's widow, Francis Johnson, with the Gold Medal. The medal is awarded to individuals "who have performed

an achievement that has an impact on American history and culture that is likely to be recognized as a major achievement in the recipient's field long after the achievement." The Senator was a co-sponsor of the legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to all Montford Point Marines who trained for duty at the segregated Montford Point facility at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

At the outbreak of WWII the US military

industrial complex was segregated along racial lines. A. Philip Randolph, the president of the Sleeping Car Porters Union, threatened a massive civil rights march to protest the continuing discrimination. President Roosevelt responded to the demand on June 25, 1941 by issuing Executive Order 8802 that created the Fair Employment Practices Committee to enforce a new rule, "there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in the defense industry or government because of race, creed, color or national origin." Johnnie Johnson, a West Virginia native, like so many other African Americans saw that order and he headed north to Detroit to work in the defense industry.

Breaking the color barrier in the military remained difficult. It took another year to even begin the recruitment of African Americans for service in the previously all white Marines. The recruits were assigned to their own segregated

unit, the Montford Point Marines. They were not allowed to attend traditional boot camps nor enter the adjacent Camp Lejeune without a white marine escort. That didn't matter to Johnnie Johnson. He was one of the first to sign up to serve his country.

In spite of the indignities and hardships of racial discrimination, the Montford Marines served with distinction in the Pacific theater and paved the way for the full end of discrimination. In 1948, President Truman

> signed Executive Order 9981 that called for full integration of the armed services and by 1949 Montford Point was deactivated.

> Johnnie Johnson was an inaugural member of the Montford Marines and served from 1942-1949. After the Marines, St. Louis became his home as he continued his march to musical fame. In presenting the medal Senator McCaskill said "Johnnie Johnson had traveled and seen

the face of racism in many different ways, yet he signed up and said, 'Take me, take me, I want to fight for my country,' knowing what he was likely to encounter in a Marine Corps that hadn't gotten used to the idea of African-Americans on the battlefield alongside white Marines. This truly was an extraordinary man."

Francis Johnson beamed as she was presented the medal. She looked out at the room filled with Johnnie's friends and admirers calling them "family." She said, "It really shows that Johnnie was more than what the average person thought they knew of a piano man. That he gave thought to his contribution to our country way back when it mattered, to become a pioneer." The St. Louis "family" shared Francis's joy back and applauded the piano man's well-deserved recognition. Johnnie Johnson really was, "Johnnie B. Goode," a man who left his indelible mark on our music, culture and freedom. \$\mathcal{I}\$



Senator Claire McCaskill presents the award to Mrs. Francis Johnson











Thank you KDHX programmers for believing in local music and making the St. Louis Blues Society's 15 in 15 compilation CD the number one played album on your airwaves in 2016.

kdhx.org/articles/10-music-news-reviews/music-news/ 429-15-in-15-at-the-top-of-the-charts-for-kdhx-in-2016



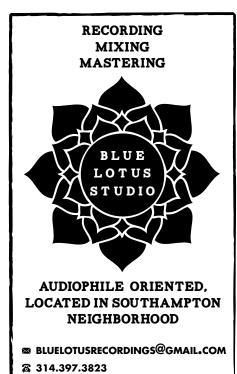




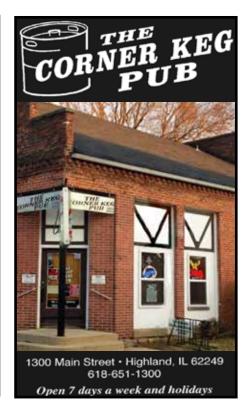
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Feb 12 Brian Curran 6PM (free)

Feb 17 New Orleans Funk Party 10pm with Naughty Professor and Gravy

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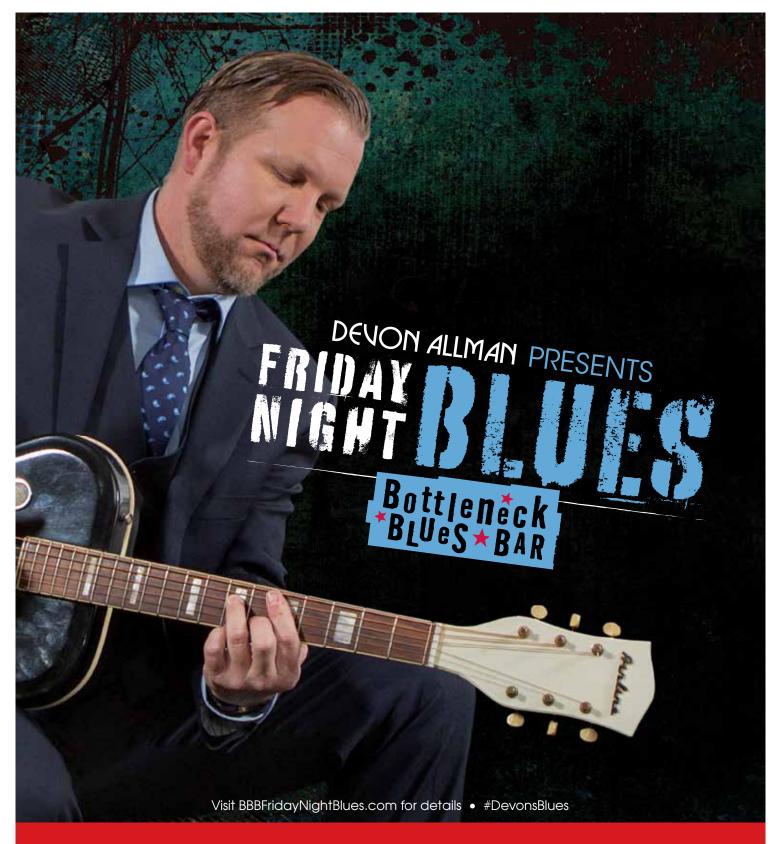
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